

[L]ook at my eyes. I guarantee you . . . we are going to end—

End—
fossil fuel.

Now, President Biden spent 2 years campaigning on hostility to American energy. Now he has spent 14 months putting that hostility right into action, and Democrats' reckless spending that has fueled across-the-board inflation has made Americans' pain at the pump even worse.

But in the last few days, the Biden administration has tried to invent some laugh-out-loud—laugh-out-loud—revisionist history. They are trying to rebrand the entire increase in gas prices on their watch—listen to this—as an effect of Putin's recent invasion of Ukraine. So they want to blame 14 months of gas price increases on the last 2 weeks of turmoil.

Washington Democrats' war on domestic energy long, long predates Putin's war on Ukraine. So let me say that again. Democrats' war on domestic energy long predates Putin's war on Ukraine.

Now, I strongly support America stopping our purchases of Putin's oil, but Democrats' 14-month war on our own production will make that necessary action more painful for American families than it had to be. If the Biden administration had spent 14 months promoting American energy instead of attacking our production and fueling inflation, we would be better positioned to push back on Putin at a less painful cost to American families.

The President's team wants to pretend this lengthy problem only started 2 weeks ago, but American families have been paying for Democrats' bad policies for a lot longer than that.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on another matter, yesterday, the House passed a bipartisan, bicameral government funding agreement that will enable crucial investments in our national defense. Putin's war on Ukraine is just one manifestation of the major long-term threats to American security and American interests posed by major competing powers like Russia and China.

So, absolutely, we must rapidly fund the urgent assistance that Ukraine and our allies along NATO's eastern flank need right now, but we must also make the investments in military modernization that will equip America to achieve peace through strength for years and decades to come.

Our military commanders have clearly and consistently told us they cannot rebuild and modernize our military to meet the growing threats if Congress lets defense funding sleepwalk from one continuing resolution to another. The world is a dangerous place. It is growing more dangerous every day. The road to peace runs through American power. We all know it is true, so we have to budget accordingly.

Our recent negotiations put us Republicans in the surreal position of having to push a Commander in Chief's party into giving his own commanders the funding they need. But, over many Democrats' objections, Republicans made sure this deal gets the job done for our Armed Forces.

The compromise product provides significantly more money than the Biden administration had requested for defense and significantly less than they requested for nondefense.

Until 24 hours ago, this compromise was also going to reprogram money away from Democrats' wasteful spending spree that neglected COVID needs and reallocate it to vaccines and treatment for the American people, but House Democrats mutinied against Speaker PELOSI. The far left would rather preserve State and local bureaucrats' giant slush funds than fund vaccines and therapeutics for our citizens, so the COVID component has fallen out.

Overall, this agreement checks the three boxes I laid out months ago. The bill maintains parity between defense and nondefense spending growth. It maintains longstanding bipartisan policies, such as protecting taxpayers against funding abortions and being politically targeted by the IRS. And new far-left poison pills were cut out. But more urgently, amidst this war in Europe, this agreement delivers aid the Ukrainians need right now and a downpayment on our commitment to keep defending America and global peace in the years to come.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, over the last few days, the Biden administration's confusing mismanagement and mixed signals surrounding the Ukraine crisis and the West's response have again spilled out into open public view.

Here is the pattern. Time and time again throughout this crisis and in the months preceding it, the administration's first instinct has been to resist strong and decisive steps. The President and his team initially take a pass on strong steps when they could have been put into place proactively and had a real deterrent effect, but then, after sustained public pressure, they buckle and implement the steps anyway, often too late. This "leading from behind" leaves us in a lose-lose scenario.

The pattern has played out yet again with this bizarre argument over MiG airplanes that President Biden's team has carried out in public with our Polish allies.

The mere fact that Biden administration officials are contradicting not only each other but also our NATO allies in public like this evidences a severe lack of the coordination and proactive leadership that we should be—us, Americans—should be providing. This isn't limited to just these Polish planes; there are all manner of

different systems, tools, and arms that our eastern flank allies and partners could be providing more readily to the brave Ukrainians. This would take American leadership and coordination and an American commitment that we will help them replace their Soviet-era stocks with American and Western military technology.

The loan guarantees we included in the supplemental appropriations bill will give the administration a tool to do just this—help eastern flank NATO partners use their own money to modernize their defensive capabilities. This would be a win for Ukraine, a win for us, and a win for NATO.

These kinds of steps should be no-brainers for a confident, assertive, and decisive American administration. Instead, it repeatedly seems like the administration's first instinct is to flinch—to flinch—wait for international and public pressure to overwhelm them, and then take action only after the most opportune moment has nearly passed us by.

Nobody wants an escalation, but if the administration keeps repeating this pattern of self-deterrence, of convincing itself that any proactive step would be irresponsible, they are just internalizing Putin's false premise and amplifying Putin's false equivalence.

Remember this: Strength is not a provocation. The world needs President Biden and his team to be leading, taking the initiative, and shaping circumstances calmly, soberly, but with confidence and decisiveness. They seem to be trapped in a cycle of passivity, indecision, self-deterrence, and then, finally, reaction. The world needs the Biden administration to be flying this plane. Too often, it feels like the plane is flying them.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RUSSIA

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, it is interesting to listen to the reaction to the notion that we are going to stop our dependence on Russian oil. I totally support that. The notion that I would buy gasoline in my hometown and put it in my car or truck and somehow subsidize what Vladimir Putin is doing in the rape of Ukraine is just unacceptable. I believe there is not only a moral force but a political force behind this. Morally, there is no way we are going to support Putin. Politically, we have to come together with other nations and make this as painful as possible on him, and stopping the import of Russian oil is a move in that direction.